ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my profound sense of gratitude and indebtedness to God for providing me such an opportunity.

This thesis would not have been possible without the help of several people. First of all, I would like to thank Dr. Shridhar (alias Raja) M. Dixit, Reader, Department of History, University of Pune, for accepting to supervise my work and for his inspiring and valuable suggestions and encouragement throughout this work. Though I thank him from the bottom of my heart, no expression of gratitude can ever be enough for his role of guru, guide and mentor. Without his support and guidance, there was little possibility of this work being carried out and completed.

I am especially thankful also to Dr. A. Bayat and Dr. E. Vamaghi and other friends in Iran for their encouragement and help throughout my research.

My special thanks to the Dr. R.P.Ranade, Professor and Head, Department of History, University of Pune for her wholehearted cooperation and valuable guidance. I am also thankful to all the members of the teaching staff and the administrative staff of the Department of History, University of Pune for their help and cooperation.

Last but not the least, my heartfelt gratitude to my family, my wife, my daughter, and my son for their outstanding support, patience, and understanding throughout my research.

There are many whom I may have missed out here, but their contribution is just as important. To them all and many others I express my deep gratitude. The responsibility of all omissions and errors is entirely mine.

Pune,                                      Hossein Mohammadi
     Agust 2007